

**Board of Health for Madison and Dane County**  
*Resolution #2018– 30*

**Resolution to Sign on to Wisconsin Public Health Association Declaration that  
Racism is Public Health Crisis**

Public Health-Madison and Dane County (PHMDC) is a member of the Dane County Health Council, a coalition of local health system and community partners working to address critical public and community health issues. Part of the work of the Health Council is addressing racism with the systems we represent within Dane County. The Wisconsin Public Health Association (WPHA) adopted a resolution declaring racism as a public health crisis on May 22, 2018. Each member of the Health Council is working within their organizations to support and sign on to this resolution.

This resolution is not only aligned with the work of the Health Council, but also the health and racial equity work of PHMDC. Signing on to this resolution will allow PHMDC to further focus our work, make a broader public statement about our commitment, and create more accountability for our work. Act on Equity, a collaboration of Ubuntu Research and Evaluation, LLC, Leaders Igniting Transformation, and Ninjas for Health, has created an online form to sign on to the declaration and to ask for specific commitments from organizations to move the work forward.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Health for Madison and Dane County, on behalf of Public Health-Madison and Dane County, agrees to sign on to the WPHA and Act on Equity Declaration that Racism is a Public Health Crisis (see Appendix A).

BE IT STILL FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Health for Madison and Dane County, on behalf of Public Health-Madison and Dane County, agrees that we will confront racism as a public health crisis by publicly asserting that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire society.

BE IT STILL FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Health for Madison and Dane County, on behalf of Public Health-Madison and Dane County, agrees that we will confront racism as a public health crisis by working to create an equity- and justice-oriented organization, with staff, and/or other stakeholders identifying specific activities to increase diversity and to incorporate anti-racism principles within leadership, staffing, and contracting.

BE IT STILL FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Health for Madison and Dane County, on behalf of Public Health-Madison and Dane County, agrees that we will confront racism as a public health crisis by incorporating educational efforts to address and dismantle racism, expand understanding of racism, and how racism affects individual and population health and by providing tools to engage actively and authentically with communities of color.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Health for Madison and Dane County, on behalf of Public Health-Madison and Dane County, agrees that we will confront racism as a public health crisis by working to build alliances and partnerships with

other appropriate organizations that are confronting racism and encourage partners and/or stakeholders to recognize racism as a public health crisis.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Board of Health for Madison and Dane County, on behalf of Public Health-Madison and Dane County, agrees that we will confront racism as a public health crisis by allocating adequate financial and human resources to accomplish all selected activities.

Drafted by: Jami Crespo, Kat Grande, Julia Olsen, Janel Heinrich  
Introduced: December 6, 2018  
Action:

## Appendix A

### WPHA and Act on Equity Declaration that Racism is Public Health Crisis

We agree Racism is a Public Health Crisis and commit to take urgent action because:

- Race is a social construction with no biological basis.
- Racism is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism is internalized or interpersonal and systemic racism is institutional or structural, and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks, that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources.
- Racism causes persistent racial discrimination in housing, education, employment and criminal justice, and an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism is a social determinant of health.
- More than 100 studies have linked racism to worse health outcomes.
- In Wisconsin, the highest excess death rates exist for African Americans and Native Americans at every stage in the life course and our infant mortality rate for infants of non-Hispanic black women is the highest in the nation.
- The American Public Health Association (APHA) launched a National Campaign Against Racism.
- Healthiest Wisconsin 2020 states that, "Wisconsin must address persistent disparities in health outcomes and the social, economic, educational and environmental inequities that contribute to them."
- Public health's responsibilities to address racism include reshaping our discourse and agenda so that we all actively engage in racial justice work.
- While there is no epidemiological definition of "crisis," the health impact of racism clearly rises to the definition proposed by Galea: "The problem must affect large numbers of people, it must threaten health over the long-term, and it must require the adoption of large scale solutions."